

Gordon Lewis Speakers Trophy

12 NOVEMBER 1996

Congratulations to *Edwina Curzon-Siggers* of Lander & Rogers, who took out the 10th Anniversary Gordon Lewis Speaker's Trophy. Her very entertaining speech focused on how to put a conventional student textbook to use in unconventional ways, in order to survive the challenges faced by young lawyers today. Edwina was later seen drinking champagne, and contemplating how to spend her \$1000, at Marchett's Tuscan Grill. She has rewritten her speech for the Journal, even though she actually did not use any notes in delivering her speech! Top effort Edwina.

Nick Harrington of Dunhill Madden Butler earned second prize with his creative use of Shakespearian verse to describe the challenges facing young lawyers. His impromptu speech on what life and lawyers would be like in year 2300 revealed his vivid imagination. He saw a world where lawyers were made redundant by computers. Common law is replaced by; "Word for Law 2301 - just feed in the facts and await the verdict", and

Banco Court, the mahogany palace, is accessed live, on line and in 3-D.

Third prize went to *Richard Moshinsky* of Phillips Fox. His speech concentrated on how the biggest challenge facing young lawyers today is finding a politically correct client. His dreams of being a "legal freedom fighter" were dashed when the reality of being a lawyer set in.

Encouragement Awards went to Adrian Anderson of Corrs Chambers Westgarth and Melissa Macken of AJ Macken & Co.

Overall the night was a great success, and all participants should be commended. The Young Lawyers Section gratefully acknowledges the generosity of The Australian Advocacy Institute, the major sponsor of this year's event, and also The Melbourne Theatre Company and The Law Institute Journal.

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Business finance: law and practice	Economic torts	Principles of corporate insolvency law
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Competition law	International air law	Rights arising out of de facto cohabitation law
Contemporary problems in the administration of criminal justice	International commercial arbitration	Sentencing
Creditors and family law	International sale of goods	Taxation of capital gains
Current issues in evidence	International taxation	Taxation of unincorporated enterprises
Current problems in taxation	Native title and land rights	Trade marks and commercial designations
Economic analysis of current issues in commercial law	Occupational health and safety	

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The Winning Speech

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Challenges facing young lawyers today

Mediation, conciliation and settlement; these are the words of the moment for the legal profession.

Young lawyers must not only be good at litigating disputes, they must also be good at resolving disputes. In that spirit, tonight I shall not only give three graphic illustrations of the challenges facing young lawyers today, I shall also give equally graphic advice as to how they can be met and overcome.

Your first challenge, should you choose to accept it, is to master trial procedure.

You've finally made it onto a big case. The partner showed you the file for the first time on the way to court, and now you're "instructing".

It's day fifteen. His Honour is in his element. The barrister for the other side is commencing his examination in chief of witness number twenty seven. The hands of the clock are moving particularly slowly. You suspect that the sound of snoring may be coming from the judge's associate.

As you listen, suddenly, from the far recesses of your brain, yes, it's all coming back to you now; final year law, Evidence and Procedure, Justice Hampel's advocacy course... leading questions! Yes, the barrister for the other side is asking a leading question! And there's more! If you're not mistaken the barrister is... leading evidence from the Bar table! You can hardly believe your luck. At last you actually have something to say to your counsel! Unfortunately your barrister is... ASLEEP!

Your razor sharp intellect turns at once to the procedural implications. Which rule deals with waking up a barrister in mid trial? And, most importantly, how do you bring counsel back to consciousness without alerting the client, who is sitting in court, that the skilled professional whom he is paying \$3,000 per day has just DOZED OFF!

That is your challenge.

Luckily, you have... THE BOOK!

(Raising the book in the air).

Yes, the "Annotated Rules of Court 1996"... the poor man's "Williams". This humble tome will resolve the trickiest procedural problem. Fortunately you have brought the book with you to court that day. It is sitting inconspicuously on the Bar table. You consult the book.

You drop the book. (Loud thud)

Your barrister leaps to his feet! And from his lips spring the words which he utters as a reflex action every morning upon rising: "Your Honour, I must object!" The case is saved. The challenge has been met, and it has been overcome.

Your next challenge, should you choose to accept it, is to succeed as a solicitor advocate.

And there is no better forum to polish your performance than the Callover of the Supreme Court Civil List with Master Kings. Or, as it is known to all articulated clerks, "Club Callover".

There are strict entry requirements to Club Callover: no denim and no one over 28. It's standing room only. You're hanging up the back, playing it cool, checking out the talent. There's a cute brunette in the corner; alternative hairstyle (plaintiff firm). Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

Suddenly you hear the words "Rangeridge Pig Abattoirs". That's your file!

Forget about making your way to the Bar table, you can't even SEE the Bar table. You call out "Master" but no one can hear you, much less see you, as you're surrounded by menacing Italian suits carrying mobile phones. Even the cute brunette is sniggering. How can you score points with the brunette, and (strictly as a secondary consideration) prevent the matter from being set down for Monday of next week?

That is your challenge.

Luckily you have... THE BOOK.

(Raising the book in the air)

Yes, the Annotated Rules of Court 1996. Once again it is this trusty volume which will get you out of trouble. (Edwina makes a quick jabbing motion with the book)

A swift prod with the spine of the Rules of Court in the spines of the Italian suits that block your way and they will part like the Red Sea. Then you need merely place the book on the floor, and stand on it, to gain that vital extra inch and a half in height. (Edwina stands on the book) Now the cute brunette, and possibly even Master Kings, can clearly see and hear you as you set a new standard in advocacy by saying "Master I appear on behalf of the defendant in that matter fixed for trial 2 days counsel not yet briefed" without drawing breath. The challenge has been met, and it has been overcome.

Your final challenge, should you choose to accept it, is to excel at file management.

The Winning Speech

You've just returned to the office after a long directions hearing and subsequent appearance before Judge "Nicks". A message has been left on your phone answering machine. Possibility number one: the partner has another 2,000 page affidavit of documents for you to do. That would be bad. Possibility number two: the partner has realised that you basically have no idea what you are doing and the firm is about to be sued. That would be a disaster. Possibility number three: the cute brunette is cancelling your dinner date. That would be the worst possible outcome. You pray fervently for possibility one or two.

The message is in an exceedingly gruff voice (which rules out the cute brunette, but not necessarily your secretary): "I'm very unhappy about the way Rangeridge Pig Abattoirs is being managed. See me in my office first thing tomorrow morning, and be prepared to explain yourself". What a relief! Dinner is still on. Yet you do somehow get the impression that the partner is not entirely happy about your work on the file. Self doubt begins to play upon your mind. That night you are unable to sleep. You go over and over the mistakes you may have made. The letters "S.L.C." flash before your eyes. "That preliminary matter should have been heard in the Children's Court, not the AAT!" you cry. "How could I have been so remiss". You are consumed with self-accusation. If this continues you will be in no condition to face the cute brunette tomorrow. Nor, for that matter, will you be in a fit state to face the partner. You need your beauty sleep. What can you do to ease your mind?

That is your challenge.

Luckily you have.....THE BOOK.

(Raises the book in the air)

Of course the Annotated Rules of Court 1996 is by your bedside. It is your constant companion. Within this single work lies the resolution to your dilemma. You open it at the Supreme Court Rules. You read for only 20 seconds. You fall into the deepest sleep which it is possible to experience without resorting to illegal substances. You awake completely refreshed the next morning. The cute brunette is impressed by your vivacity. And you survive the scathing criticism of your work by the partner. Such criticism is, after all, quite justified considering your incompetence. You swear that never again will you allow the tops of the pages put on the spike to be out of line. The challenge has been met, and it has been overcome.

It matters not whether the challenges you face as a young lawyer are in trial procedure, advocacy, or file management. If you keep the Annotated Rules of Court 1996 in one hand, and a sense of humour in the other, you can't go wrong.

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